

**Musical Work in the Time of COVID-19 Oral History Project**  
**Labor Archives of Washington**  
**University of Washington Libraries Special Collections**

**Evan Howard**  
**Freelance Cellist and Sound Engineer**  
**New York City, New York**

**Narrator: Evan Howard**

**Interviewers: Kathryn Leland**

**Subjects:** freelance, cellist, ringer, sound engineer, chamber, New York City renaissance, Kauffman Center

**Location:** Brooklyn, New York

**Date:** May 21, 2021

**Interview Length:** 00:45:39

**File Name:** HowardEvan\_2021\_C19\_Video\_Interview\_Completed.mp4

**EVAN 00:00:15**

Continue

**KATHRYN 00:00:18**

Great, okay. So my name is Kathryn Leland and I'm currently in Seattle, Washington on ZOOM with Evan Howard, who I believe is in his apartment in Brooklyn, New York.

**EVAN 00:00:30**

Correct.

**KATHRYN 00:00:31**

And it is May 21st, of 2021. There we go. And we are doing an interview for the project musical work in the time of COVID-19. And we're just here to chat about Evan's experiences, pre and post COVID and work. And, Evan, do you consent to it being recorded and submitted for project credit?

**EVAN 00:01:00**

Absolutely.

**KATHRYN 00:01:01**

Fantastic. Okay, so first question is what is your name? And how do you spell it?

**EVAN 00:01:10**

My name is Evan Howard is spelled E-V-A-N H-O-W-A-R-D.

**KATHRYN 00:01:17**

Perfect. And when were you born and where?

**EVAN 00:01:22**

I was born on October 29 1998, in Vancouver, Washington.

**KATHRYN 00:01:29**

And do you identify with specific gender and use specific pronouns?

**EVAN 00:01:35**

Yes, my pronouns are he, him, his, and I'm a boy, male, I guess? Yeah.

**KATHRYN 00:01:44**

Um, okay, so we'll just get into the nitty gritty now. How would you describe your employment before the pandemic hit?

**EVAN 00:01:54**

Multifaceted, verdant, even, like I had a lot of different jobs that it didn't feel like a struggle to find additional work. It was like super, what's the word I'm looking for, accommodating to kind of all the different artistic disciplines that I'm really interested in. And I have a lot of people come to me with so many different opportunities that I even had to like, say no, to a couple, which is, I don't know, a rarity now.

**KATHRYN 00:02:24**

Yeah, that's pretty great. Can you just describe some of the jobs that you were doing? And in all of their various forums?

**EVAN 00:02:35**

Yeah. So I guess we can kind of divide the work that I was doing in two. So I was a freelancer before the pandemic, I guess I still am, but less so. The three kinds of main categories were work that involved in music, work that involved some type of design, and then kind of like a third other type of work that didn't really have a specific category. So before the pandemic, I was freelancing as a graphic designer in New York City, I designed project briefs, websites, worked with like unfilled affiliate ensembles of Carnegie Hall, other major music groups. In terms of music work, I was a ringer at the Kauffman Center at their special music school on the Upper West Side. I was a temp at chamber music Lincoln Center. I was working as an orchestral chamber music ringer, I think that was the title of working for the composition department, as well as the conducting department at the new school. I was an orchestral librarian for a little bit so I was doing a lot of various musical freelance stuff. And then I also provided childcare to a close friend pre-pandemic and I guess I walked some dogs here and there too. So.

**KATHRYN 00:03:52**

Gotta do what you can. And for those listening that may not know what would you describe a ringer as, what does that actually entail?

**EVAN 00:04:00**

Yeah, of course. So a ringer specifically for orchestral music is an individual that is not on a roster and is not assigned to a sub position but is somebody that is asked to come on a contracted basis to fulfill a position that has not yet been allocated to another individual. So for example, at the Kauffman Center, at their special music school, they didn't have a cellist enroll for the entire semester, and they needed an additional cello player to come in and perform one specific piece and so they would need to fill in a ringer and that was the person that that was me that came in and rung for that specific position.

So it wasn't like I was the dedicated substitute cellist like you might see like an orchestra or a ballet but I was contracted for this one specific piece and then after that, I was actually brought on board as a substitute chamber music player, but then there was the pandemic.

**KATHRYN 00:05:01**

Great— and how did you feel about your employment before the pandemic? Did you? Do you feel like you were kind of that it was helpful for your career? I know that you were still in school and you're still in school. One more quarter, correct?

**EVAN 00:05:19**

Yes. So well, I actually graduated this spring, but I'm just fulfilling my degree requirements. Still in school. Yeah, it was just nice to have a lot of work that just kind of worked around my schedule and was very easy to pick up gigs between classes or have something kind of steady on the weekend, like I did at the Kauffman Center. It was just, it was nice to have a steady income stream that although it wasn't— what's the word I'm looking for— predictable between week to week, it was enough to where I could feel comfortable with the income that I have through, like scholarships and loans for my school on top of my freelance income just allowed me to kind of float by and not have to worry about money during that period of time, which was very nice. *(laugh)*

**KATHRYN 00:06:11**

And how often would you say in a typical week, did you go and do one of these... gigs, rehearsals, whatever it was, like once a week, twice a week?

**EVAN 00:06:24**

Like, four or five times a week.

**KATHRYN 00:06:25**

Oh, really? Okay—Yeah, so Okay—So a lot of your— I have a question about your typical day, but a lot of your typical day then would be like doing school things. And then you would have a work thing. Most days you would say, I guess.

**EVAN 00:06:45**

Yeah. So I think what a lot of people don't realize about musician work, too. And you obviously do but like the layman is that there's a lot of the rehearsal and the prep work that goes before the actual performance that we're still getting paid for. But it's, but it's auxiliary to the actual gig itself, that we would say, like I performed this thing, but rather like nobody talks about, like the hours of rehearsals that we have before that. So in a typical week, I had every weekend, I would go to the Kauffman Center on Saturday and Sunday, to perform as the ringer that included the rehearsal times, there were also performances that would go on throughout their calendar year in their quarters. And so there were a couple of moments where I had additional rehearsals throughout the week, with them, including actual performances, that was just for the Kauffman Center. I also worked at National Sawdust, [non-profit performing arts organization and music venue in the heart of Williamsburg, Brooklyn] and which is a nonprofit organization in Brooklyn, New York, run by Paola Prestini. And, I had a lot of work there doing audio engineering, as well as performing with groups that would come in and have new substance cellists or like additional muscle, I guess, in their string section. And so I would have that about three, two weeks. The conducting department had weekly rehearsals before the actual lessons of the conducting department. So that was two rehearsals. And same with the composition department. Except that was more spaced out the week in three different rehearsals because it was once per lesson. And there were different rosters of players going to specific compositional studios to perform works. And that was all sight reads, there were no ever like final performances. And then they were like typical things that were built around the New School that happened more frequently. And then the

other larger Commission's like my work that I did for an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall, Dakota, that was a much larger graphic design project. But I had the ability to break that up over a larger period of time, because I could do that remotely because it was just freelance graphic design work. But yeah, that company was working on that about an hour, hour and a half every day for a good month so that was something that was keeping me busy, but again, that time was broken up throughout my schedule. So it wasn't like I was sitting down for an hour block period of time. And then yeah, just the occasional gig that I would have, like some childcare so that would take up an evening, assuming I wasn't doing a different gig or had a different rehearsals. So yeah, it was just a lot of rehearsals and gigs.

**KATHRYN 00:09:30**

Yeah, juggling a lot for sure. Yeah. So this question is probably gonna seem very obvious to us now. But when the pandemic hit, what exactly shifted in your work life?

**EVAN 00:09:42**

Wow. Yeah. So I, just for some context, I went to the University of Washington before I came to New York, as you know, and a lot of the gigs that I had at the University of Washington were either in downtown Seattle, or at like in the U District [University District]. And there's a very clear kind of artery that takes you between those two, it's like the bus or the link. But in New York, like you're gonna have a gig, one in Queens, one in the Bronx, which are wildly far apart boroughs and neighborhoods. And so you're constantly having to take subway to commit to all these gigs. And so the thing that I immediately noticed is a because we couldn't travel at all, the only gigs that I could take were the ones that were very local, or the ones that I have a very safe and convenient way to get to like either walking or like riding a bike to which severely limited kind of immediate area that I lived in, because I live in, at the time, I lived further into Brooklyn, and most of my gigs were in Manhattan, but I lived near a train line. So it was very easy, not during COVID when the subways were running correctly and, and on time, and nobody was concerned about taking them, to just get to the city in 15 minutes, but now it was like I can't do any gigs in the city at all. I can't do any gigs that are outside of my immediate neighborhood for a long time, which was zero. So it was like relying on unemployment.

**KATHRYN 00:11:17**

So you, you would say that you were more hindered, I guess by your location, then were things cancelled immediately, or were there opportunities that you could have gone to? I guess, is my question? Yeah.

**EVAN 00:11:34**

So at the beginning of, because I'll always remember, it was like March 13. And I was actually working that night. I was watching one of the kids that I watch, and his parents were actually, his parents are musicians, and they were out performing. And I was watching another teacher. I was streaming their performance because he had already put the kid to bed. And so it was like, very musical night. There's a lot going on. I remember the night before I went to Carnegie Hall, the very first time to watch. Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman performed with Leonidas Kovakos, the violinist, probably butchering his name, but it was an amazing program. And we were all like, COVID, this is crazy, like what's happening, and we're all in the theater. And then the very next day, it was like, like, everything was shut down. I remember my teacher and his wife getting back. And— I know this is why they weren't out at performances. The wife was in Minneapolis, because her opera was getting premiered —her brand new opera. And the husband was coming back from DC [District of Columbia]. His DC performances canceled that day, I was with the kid the entire day. And he had to take the train up, like the next train because his performance was canceled. He wanted to get back as soon as possible because things were like shutting down actively over this twenty four hour period on March 13, 2020. And—

**KATHRYN 00:12:56**

2020

**EVAN 00:12:56**

2020. Thank you. (*laugh*) Yes. And then, his wife, I remember he, he rolled up in his car, and I was helping him unload his audio equipment. And he gets a call from his wife. And he's like, Oh, my God. And that was the call that her opera got cancelled. And it was, I remember all the fundraising that went into this opera, it was like a multi million dollar project with the City of Minneapolis and like a whole bunch of incredible guest artists coming and it just just got canceled, like the entire thing up in smoke, which was insane. And I remember taking his extra gear up to the apartment, and then telling me He's like, yeah, I have like eight phone calls between on the train drive coming up from DC. And in that time span, I lost like \$68,000. And it's like, I, I... and that's like the top of the ecosystem, right? Like, I'm not anywhere near this level. But the amount, like everything getting canceled overnight is what I remember from like, March of 2020, is that all of my gigs immediately evaporated, which I just assumed, like if, if those two aren't performing, of course, I'm not going to have any of my stable gigs and I had concert tickets to see Pink Martini, and then to play with them one of those nights in April, that went up in smoke. Just like so many things that were immediately like, we don't know what's happening and even school too, because we have so many— It's a commuter school, like nobody really lives on campus because there isn't exactly a campus at the New School besides a main Student Union Building. But (*pause*) we— it was right as we were rolling into Spring break because East Coast universities, I remember losing my first year, then it was like, 'Oh, we have such an early Spring break.' And— the school was like we're actually taking spring break a week early and it's gonna be three weeks long and we're gonna figure out like how to do this whole thing online and we're gonna make these mandatory like online training seminars a thing. It was crazy. Like how quickly everything immediately went from being all over the city to like, just in my little basement room in Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood.

**KATHRYN 00:15:14**

Wow.

**EVAN 00:15:15**

That was a lot, I'm sorry.

**KATHRYN 00:15:16**

Yeah, no, I'm like, I'm like, [EVAN: ?Inaudible?] transported back. Yeah. Well, (*pause*) so since that first, like immediate shutdown of everything, and nobody really knew how to do anything safely, or what was what was okay really, have you— Do you feel like you've gotten any work, as the year kind of progressed and things got more normal, were you offered things that you didn't feel safe doing, or?

**EVAN 00:15:45**

You know, it's weird, because New York was the epicenter of the pandemic, for a very long time. It was like ground zero for it kind of came to, because it the very first reported case was in Seattle, I remember my parents making the joke of like, glad you got out of Seattle, like go to New York, and then like, immediately (*clap of hands*) afterwards, New York, was just slammed, and there was absolutely no work for between March until July. And then things started to get better. And, New York kind of had that premature victory of— like, we beat it and everything. And it's almost like we did such a great job, like shaking my own hand with like, how great a job I did. And then for the summer, it was like 300 cases a day, five deaths a day, like very good numbers compared to much earlier that Spring, the numbers are still terrible, but like, enough to where restrictions we're easing up we were easing up out of levels of lockdown. And I had one gig where I play at— kind of a spur of the moment wedding that happened, it was like somebody they've been dating for like, six weeks, and he had like, she had nursed him back to health from COVID. And then she got COVID and he nursed her back to health and they were like, 'Let's get married then'. We were, I remember, my trio called me. And they were like, we have a gig if you want? And I was like, what are you talking about? Like a gig? Like, that still exists? And it was a cute little

wedding in the West Village and a little church, and it was outside. And so we were like, okay, we're cool. We're cool with it being outside. And, it was just so surreal, like playing with people again, because it had been so long. And yeah, it was just, just a tiny little wedding. But I'll always remember what—the mother of the kid that I watched was saying, she's a very prominent artistic individual in the city. And she talked about how it's, it's this, like coral bleaching of this artistic ecosystem, and how so many people were like, have moved out, and like New York will be irreparably changed, not, not dead, because everyone loves to say like, New York is dead. But New York never dies. That's rule number one. But, this hierarchy definitely changed. And all of these really established artists left these super urban areas to, I don't know, to take their families to the burbs or like to move to LA [Los Angeles] because apparently that was a popular destination to go from New York. And I remember thinking, when artistic opportunities start to come back, it's only going to be for these kinds of artists that fled. That had the means to like get out of the city, and like the students in this next generation of artists that, we're going to be like stunted because we're not gonna have any gigs, we're not gonna have any performance opportunities, we're not gonna have any of the the regular normative transitional gigs that take you from this student to this performer like that none of that is going to exist for a very long time. And because the people at the very top are the ones that everyone trusts to put on the performances and already established and already have the connections, and so it's going to be on my generation to kind of rebuild, what that ecosystem even looks like, and how it even functions in New York and in other large cities, too. So—and that's still the case now is like you're seeing things start to open up. New York just fully opened back up yesterday, the day before, which is crazy. And you hear the announcement from the United States that the CDC that we don't have to wear masks anymore for fully vaccinated, which is crazy. We'll get into that later. But all these opportunities are slowly coming back and I actually just got a gig this morning. It's for \$20 but it's with other cellists that I really admire and like it's with new cellists at the big cello choir thing kind of flashmob pop up and I was like, you know, it'd be cool to be a part of that. And my chamber music coach, Rebecca Fisher, she's an amazing violinist. She talked a lot about how special it's going to be to be in New York during this kind of Renaissance. And this, this rebirth of New York. And that's kind of a big incentive of why I want to stay here to pursue my masters in New York is because I want to be a part, I want that same energy that I had the beginning of my undergrad like running with new jobs and gigs, but having it being these jobs and gigs that as a master's student, I can like, help repair this artistic environment, that New York is so famous for.

**KATHRYN 00:20:39**

So you feel a lot of responsibility for this then? Is that— is that scary or invigorating or? How do you feel about that? Well, both! Okay, tell me about that.

**EVAN 00:20:49**

It's both, all the emotions, it's terrifying, because I have no idea what the hell I'm doing. And I know a lot of people my age have no idea what we're doing. Sorry for swearing.

**KATHRYN 00:20:59**

It's okay.

**EVAN 00:21:02**

But it's also super exciting, because I think of these times in New York history, because I'm a big New York romantic, you know, this about me, you're a close friend of mine, like in the 80s and in the twenties where like, it's this once in a generation time, where the young people get to kind of take back New York, from all like, the rich old ladies living on the Upper East Side. And, and be like, no, this is what we're doing here. And like this is what the artistic scene is, here's what we're gonna do. And, I have a lot of ideas and things that I want to do myself. And I will have space to actually do those now, because it's not like Lincoln Center is going to put on another Beethoven's Symphony anytime soon, and, but those players still exist, and they need work. And we even see things right now, it's been a big discussion in the conservatory

landscape of New York, a lot of students at Manhattan School music, Juilliard, Mannes, NYU [New York University], I hope I'm not forgetting anyone I probably am, sorry, that like trying to support our teachers that are Met musicians, because the Met [Metropolitan Opera House Musicians] has come out and been like, we don't really care that you belong to the Met. And we're not going to give you any benefits or help you through the pandemic. And so all of our teachers have been cultivating these really amazing opportunities for Met musicians to perform with younger people. And now the Met has their own kind of independent union and performance space outside of Lincoln Center, which is crazy. So like all of these very unique, artistic opportunities are popping up and I'm really excited to be a part of that, too. And we, at the same time, the uncertainty is deafening as we look into the void. Like, what—— are we going to do? There's definitely a hunger for it. Like, there's definitely people that need it right now. I think art is one of the only things that got people through the pandemic at home. And I think of how, or I'm hopeful, rather, that it will change the public perception of the importance of the arts, even outside of cities like New York, and San Francisco and Seattle, and Portland, where they were already really valued. But—— having a more, I don't know, global respect for musicians, not just as people who live— off of excess, you know, like the "Oh, once we fixed all the roads and done everything and like, everyone is healthy, then we can pay the musicians like a living wage, because we'll have the money for it," but rather like thinking of musicians and artists, as an essential ingredient in a health— as part of healthy communities and healthy cities, and prosperous cultures, because they have been historically and I don't know what happened. Maybe it's late stage capitalism, I don't know! We'll find out.

**KATHRYN 00:24:03**

So would you say that that is kind of an advantage to the situation that we've been put in without any choice? If you would, would you claim any advantages to this? Or was it all just awful? I don't know-

**EVAN 00:24:25**

That's really hard, because I think you have to look at case studies of musicians by year because right now, I know musicians that are the year before us, like the seniors when we were juniors, where it's been a really hard time because they've, it's been an entire year of them not being in school, or being in school, but like in a master's program. Or, you know, like dealing with the kind of the brunt of the pandemic because they're trying to do something new. And then there's people like us that we already had, like a whole like half a year to kind of figure out what being a musician online looks like. And it's helped us to adapt. But now at the same time, like we're graduating, and it's like, we're in the same boat as the people before us. And then you have, like freshmen musicians that are just starting, that are going to *(pause)* I think, carry this experience and have it informed them, but maybe they're not going to be as financially impacted by the pandemic as more senior musicians. So I think it all depends on where you kind of fall in this musical school spectrum of the grades and how that's going to ultimately impact you more long term. But I think that all in all, it's going to have a big culture shift that will be beneficial for the music community. But in the immediate sense, I don't think there are a lot— of a lot of pluses, I think a lot of the benefits are going to happen long term that we can't see yet. But a lot of the stuff that's currently happened\_ it's just terrible. *(nervous laugh)* I mean, 33% of the not-for-profits in New York City are gone. *(pause)* Forever. *(pause)* Like, that was what was feeding the artistic community. And that is how you have these generations of musicians build up and, and I think we're gonna have a ton of resilient musicians rise through the ranks over the next few years. But I think it's going— to force a lot of people that would have been a part of the music musical ecosystem out, and they're not going to be able to continue to pursue their art because there's needs to be a level of resiliency, whether that's like socio economic, racial, financial, that— that comes with being able to survive something like this and continue your art afterwards. And— it's just, it's all, all the pluses, I think, are much further down the line that we can't see, like asked me again, in five years, *(laugh)* I'll have a lot more good things to say. But right now, it's like this ain't it!

**KATHRYN 00:27:01**

Yeah, I completely understand. How have you connected with other musicians in this period? I know that a lot of that may have been through your school. But I know you said you had a trio that you performed at a wedding with. Is there anything that you guys, specifically, do to stay connected and together?

**EVAN 00:27:23**

You know, it's interesting, because in terms of new relationships, not a lot, *(pause)* *(laugh)* not a lot of new musicians. I think a lot of that is the culture of going to zoom online. There's not like bumping into hallways, there's not the same, the same familiar faces every day. There's not time with the professor's late to class and you're all waiting and somebody cracks a snide remark, you're all laughing and then you get to know each other like that, you don't have these micro interactions that build up to a greater sense of community. And so, the most contact that I had with other musicians were musicians that I already had a really strong relationship with prior to the pandemic, like my pianist friend, Rebecca, who moved back to California. And my friend Mark, who is, was a graduating master student when I was a junior at the New School. [The New School, New York City] And— my duo partner Adie Baban who's a violinist who is a year below me. And it's all these musical individuals that I knew prior to the pandemic, and had a good relationship with that I've been in touch with. I've done some chamber music online with them. This spring, I had the opportunity to actually play and rehearse the Ravel duo Sonata with my friend, Adie, the violinist, and just reconnecting with, with professors that I had for previous semesters and having these kind of webs of accountability between friends and musicians and making sure that like, "How are you staying motivated?", "How are you doing?" But it's been a lot more emotional caring for each other, as opposed to like, professional working out for each other, at least for me and my experiences, but....

**KATHRYN 00:29:09**

You said you did some chamber music online and things like that, how was that?

**EVAN 00:29:13**

Oh, terrible. *(laugh)* So the school had this really kind of romantic idea of like, "we'll do chamber music online, because that's teaching kids how to do chamber music." But instead what it was, it's more of like a Recording Arts Project [Student Practice Organization operating under the oversight of Faculty Advisor and Managing Attorney Professor Brian Price] where you're really teaching the students how to use the technology. And that's kind of what it should have been advertised as at the beginning. But I'm also a freelance audio engineer, so I should've talked about that too. And *(pause)* more recently, those were a lot of the gigs that I was getting was— editing people's recitals and like all the online stuff, so that created a different category of work that I didn't have before. But, as the audio engineer and like this chamber music thing, it was kind of my responsibility to like put everything together and explain to people, no, you have to wear headphones if you're recording, otherwise, you're recording on top of all the other parts that you're playing on your laptop speaker. And so— it was just exhausting to have to be that- that person a lot of the time. And— it just wasn't the chamber music experience that I crave. And, I'm always looking for which is like this deep relationship building, like it's almost less about the music and more about the people that you're making the music with. And I—I thankfully, I got that, in the spring with my friend Adie, because working with her in person was super gratifying. Even our coach wasn't allowed to come to school, which was a bummer, but...

**KATHRYN 00:30:45**

So sorry, you touched on your job as a sound engineering. So you feel like you've kind of gotten more opportunities with that as the pandemic is preceded just out of need, essentially?

**EVAN 00:31:00**

Yeah, because a lot. It's funny, a lot of musicians, especially in the classical music world, feel like it's less than the jazz world and for at least in a music school setting, they just have no experience with the technology component of music



making. And I will always remember my old music history professor, Sasha Zamler-Carhart [The New School] talking about how in the 21st century, our instrument isn't the box or like the vocal cords that we vibrate, or like whatever physical object that we're making the noise from, but it's the room, it's the microphone, it's your computer, it's the audio interface, it's the editing, it's everything around that. And, a lot of those skills for my peers didn't exist, pre-pandemic, and kind of really don't now (*laugh*) if I'm being completely honest. But even though I lost this chamber music experience, I did gain a lot of audio engineering experience that I haven't in the past, like three years, been doing because I haven't taken any audio engineering classes, just because of what was offered at my universities, covered fundamentals that I already had, but it was a lot more hands on experience of, "Oh, can you try to edit out some of this background noise?" Or, "hey, I have this tape that needs to get submitted for this college audition?", "Can you review it for me and assemble all the footage?" and, so I had a lot more work come in, in the form of digital— work from home. Very, like project based, quick, friends, needing an audio engineer, which was great, then I could connect with my other friends that were audio engineers, and we could like share resources. And, we talked a lot with each other about workflow and just kind of paying ourselves as great as possible, by like, streamlining the process and making it as easy as possible. So, every project wasn't something that was super specific and fine tuned. It's still at a high level of quality, but rather like you could take it on in a kind of conveyor belt approach of like, here are all the things that I need to do. So, I can get back to my online classes. Like, how to like, I guess that's the key— [the] component of my work during the pandemic was, "How do I do things as efficiently as possible to safeguard my own, like, mental bandwidth?" Because, when everything is online, that's the thing that I struggled the most with this pandemic, and still am, is a lack of demarcating space between a place where I practice, a place where I work, a place where I go to school, a place where I do literally everything is all of a sudden become like my room on a computer. And, so how do I control the energy output of every individual task without a sense of I'm moving from a practice room to like my lesson to my classroom to work and, and having a break in between even if it's just walking to those locations can be such a (*pause*) like a time to come together and just like refocus on like the next task at hand. Where we don't get that in an online environment. So, a lot of my work has been like "How do I make it as easy as possible for myself, so I can just move on to the next thing and remain\_ not dead at the end of every day, feeling like a zombie burnt out?"

**KATHRYN 00:34:22**

Yeah. Yeah. (*laugh*) I get that. So, you've kind of already touched on this, but I want to kind of get into some— wrap up. More... I don't know if philosophical is quite the right word, but that kind of stuff. So what kind of role do you think your musical work or musical work in general, but especially yours, I guess, plays in society? And, you already talked about this a little bit with just how it's important, essentially. But— did you have any additional thoughts on that or do you feel like you've already addressed that?

**EVAN 00:35:17**

I will say that I think the reason why I'm so invested in chamber music and music making in general is that the work that I do ultimately comes down to bringing people together and creating a sense of community and space and that's what's been so hard about this pandemic, is that the way to protect our community is to stay as far apart from each other as possible. And, to self isolate, which is tremendously difficult as social beings and I, I really missed the community aspect of music making. And for me, the most important part and because it's the part that's in service of others, is how to bring people together in a celebration of something that is impossible to describe with regular words, but it's just the shared experience that we get to have together and like, yeah. It's all about the community for me, not having that is really hard. The community of my neighbors that I'm performing for, the community of my fellow like orchestra musicians that I'm in rehearsals with, and the overall like, music school community that I miss being a part of, like, my, even my small cello studio community that I don't have anymore, but I really miss, so. Yeah, it's, it's, it's community.

**KATHRYN 00:36:45**

Um,—again, you kind of already implied this, but I would like to really focus in on this, I guess. When it is safe, will you return to your old work? Will you— How will your work change in that? I know you're talking a lot about the changing scene of— music scene of New York. Do you think that's going to impact the jobs that you receive, post pandemic, I suppose?

**EVAN 00:37:09**

*(Pause)* You know, you say, "Will I return to my old work?" I'm not sure that my old work will exist. If I'm being completely honest, and I'm not really sad about that, too. Because I think that what I have, what I've learned is how to— how to \_ pay myself what I'm worth. And so some of the gigs that I've had, are— I have to analyze this- will this really, like,—enrich me artistically? And, and force me to grow coming out of the pandemic? Or, "Is this, is this worth my time?" Like is this dollar amount correspond to me having attained a conservatory undergrad degree in New York City, as a New York City musician that has to pay rent. And so it's, whereas before, it was like, take every gig, say yes to everything to like, build out that network. And I already have that network still intact. And now I can be a little bit more—what's the word, like I can strategize more about how I want these gigs to, to build in a larger framework that will ultimately serve me further down the line. And, and even with this cello gig today, like, yeah, it was only \$20. But it's also nineteen other cellists that I don't know and that are in the same boat as me, that are probably going to be friends, or I will play with again. And, even though it isn't a lot of money. It's a really cool event that's like in public. And that will ultimately get covered and allow me to like have more accolades, too. So, I said yes to this one, even though I had to think about it for a second. Is it worth my time right now to like an... two to have like an hour rehearsal and like an hour performance, and only get paid \$20? It's like, no—, it's not worth my time. But, it is worth the investment of my time into something much larger, because ultimately, it's these connections coming out of the pandemic that are going to be the ones that lead to more non \$20 gigs, hopefully, or more people that I can call on if I do need more people to— to work with or ask a favor of or do this artistic project with. So, as much as I wish that I had the very fluid stream of income coming through all of these smaller jobs, I am grateful that I have the ability to *(pause)* shape the work that I'm getting. And, in the way that I want to—like in a way that I want to work on these actual projects instead of just saying yes to every opportunity.

**KATHRYN 00:39:55**

Yeah. Would you say that your goals have actually changed in that way, then? Because you're looking at kind of different forms of employment, you're looking at employment in a slightly different way. Do you think goals are the same, but you're just approaching them differently? Or...

**EVAN 00:40:11**

Hm...*(pause)* I think both the goals and the work is changed. Because before it was, there was less of— The goal was to get to New York City and then I did that. And then it was like, how do I- how do I be a New York City cellist and that was kind of the goal is figure out how to do that. And then all of a sudden, the idea, the physical concept of New York City cellist became extinct overnight. And, so it's like, "Okay, how do I be an artist, a musician in the twenty-first post COVID century?" and I guess that's now the goal, too. And so that's the guiding star. And it's still very much aligned with like, how do I be a New York City cellist, that's still a thing. But now it has a much deeper context behind it than it did before. And now all the work has to do as well, because there's no more of these like little froofroo gigs anymore— after after the COVID.

**KATHRYN 00:41:13**

Yeah, yeah, it'll be a long time before froofroo gigs come back.

**EVAN 00:41:18**

The ones who like we're just gonna make music to sound pretty, like, everything has a meeting, which is great. It's all very serious now. Do you enjoy that? That it's all very serious, or do you-? Nope! I mean yes and no, like I missed the excess, the extravagance of everything. But, I think there still will be that too. But, everything is now framed by the pandemic whether we like it or not, like all this stuff, it's like this is just about it sounding nice, is— is comes from a place of I—we've only had to think seriously, because of the pandemic, all this stuff, that's "this is very serious music" is serious because of the pandemic, like everything is framed because of the pandemic. And, that's what I hate. More than more than like, the lack of extravagance, or the extravagance or whatever, it's getting into everything has to relate back to this moment. But, I think that's the essential part in the healing process for the ecosystem. [Kathryn: Yea] It has had me wanting to learn— how to compose though, because I think composers are kind of— leaders in these in these artistic movements, the way that like kind of painters define their own artistic movements, you know, like painting movements, that composers are the same for musicians. And, I am just really interested in this idea of the performer composer. And I think it's going to be an essential role that musicians are going to have to learn how to simultaneously create and perform at the same time. That's really exciting to me. And it's not something that I would have thought about before the pandemic too, because I'm like, there are people that are writing music. But now it's like, I want to tell my story, because I'm tired of having to live through COVID again, and again and again, through these 80 billion other people that are trying to tell their story. And, I want to tell my story, probably gonna be unrelated to COVID. But..

**KATHRYN 00:41:53**

That's great. That's amazing. All right. Well, I think I'm just out of questions for you. Did you have any final thoughts? Anything you wanted to add, any questions about the project itself? Anything like that?

**EVAN 00:43:29**

Yeah, how big is like? How many interviews are going to be amassed from your class? Do you know, roughly?

**KATHRYN 00:43:34**

So um, there's, I believe, Oh, God, I should know. There's about 10 of us, I think. And we're all required to do three to five. So at least 30. They're not all going to be submitted to the labor archives of Washington, a fair number of them will be I believe, we hope. I will be sending you the permission form for that if you choose to do that. If not, that's totally fine as well. But, yeah, it'll be very interesting— collection. I was thinking about performing this interview earlier. And I just, I was thinking about all the things that were just so obvious to me, like, I mean, of course, he didn't have any jobs in March. Like, why would he? Nobody had any jobs in March, but at the same time, like, in 50 years, our grandkids won't have any idea. Like, oh.

**EVAN 00:44:38**

It'll be like, "What do you mean, there wasn't any work?" They're like already working from home and they're like twelve. [inaudible] How New York is structured as a city around like office space. That's empty now. [Kathryn: Yeah] So, like (pause) I hope, I hope that changes. I hope that we don't ever have to fill those giant beautiful skyscrapers with like people at a desk, because those people at a desk can work from home, in the suburbs and do all the boring stuff online. But, yeah, I'm really glad that the kind of more vulnerable populations are talking about the work that they were doing in the past. I think it's— I think we're at a point in history. It's getting written down, as cliché as it sounds.

**KATHRYN 00:45:28**

And yeah, it's an exciting project to be a part of, and I'm glad that I got to have you as part of it as well.

**EVAN 00:45:36**

I appreciate you letting me gabble and talk.

**KATHRYN** 00:45:39

My honor. Well, thank you very much for your participation. And I think as long as you are fine with this and done saying everything you want to say I'm going to stop recording, good? Great.